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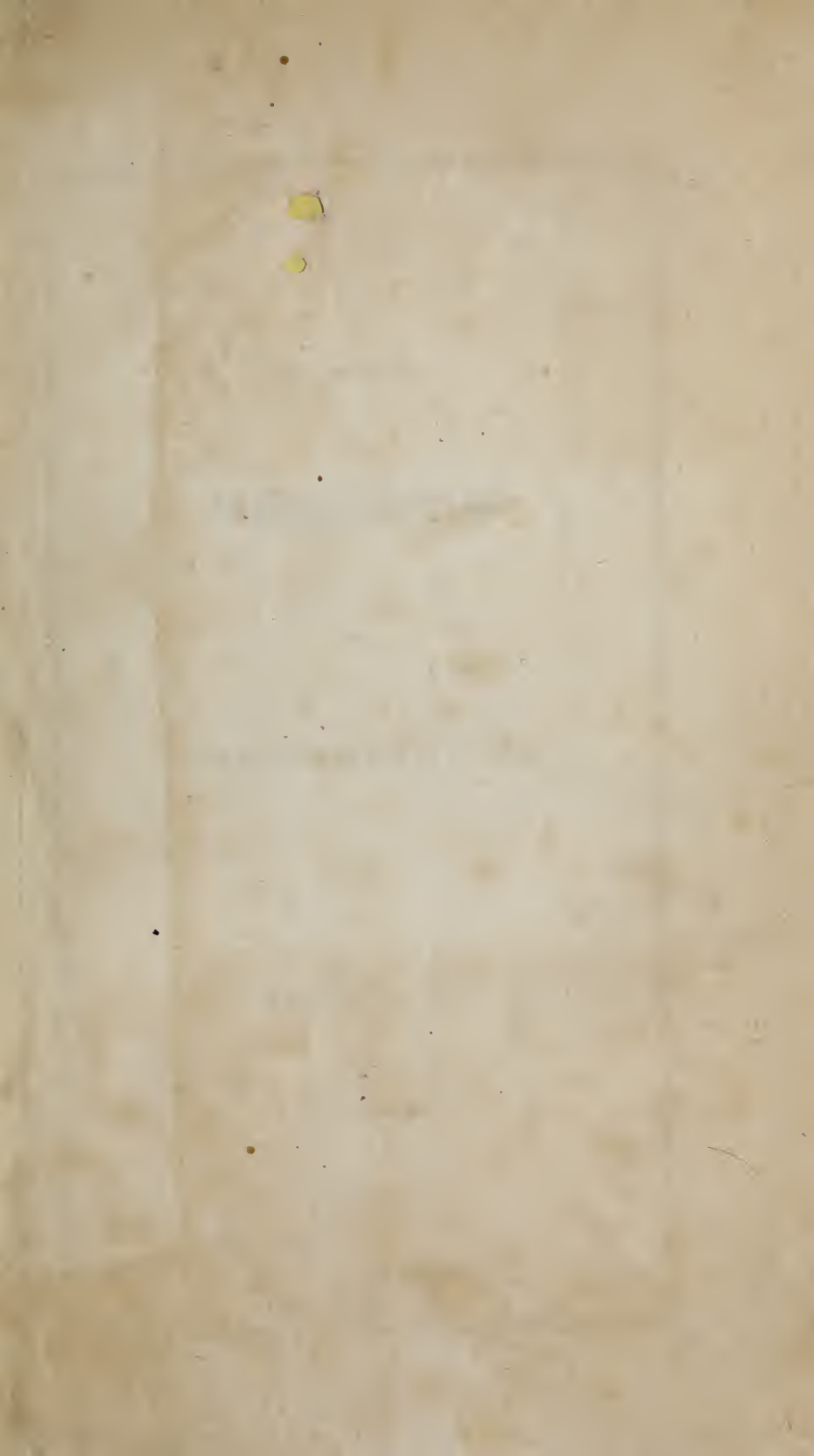
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MR. PEABODY'S SERMON

AT THE

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INSTALLATION

OF

REV. NATHANIEL S. FOLSOM.

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Christian Union.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE INSTALLATION

OF

REV. NATHANIEL S. FOLSOM,

Red.
OVER THE

FIRST CHURCH AND PARISH IN HAVERHILL, MS.
OCTOBER 7, 1840.

BY

ANDREW P. PEABODY,

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

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S E R M O N .

ROMANS 8: 19.

THE EARNEST EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE WAITETH FOR THE
MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD.

ARE these words less true, than when the apostle penned them? I apprehend not. The sons of God are not manifest to each other,—they are therefore not manifest to the world. And man still waits for his regeneration, the nations still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, till the church arise and shine.

To one, who casts a superficial glance over Christendom, the first view is, it must be confessed, discouraging and appalling. We see numberless sects, in their views of doctrine diverging widely from each other, accusing each other of fundamental and fatal error, and arrogating, each to itself, the sole possession of the truth; and we can scarce name a doctrine, which has not been the subject of controversy,—which has not been denied by some calling themselves Christians. It seems as if the whole field of christian faith were in dispute,—nothing settled,—nothing left unimpugned,—no safe ground, on which the humble and timid soul may anchor its trust and hope. And many a lowly and anxious mind looks upon this state of things with distress, nay, with despair, and utterly abandons the attempt to know Jesus and to understand his gospel. Meanwhile, the adversaries of the faith rejoice over the divided camp, the clashing armor, the angry recriminations of the christian host; and some grow sceptical even of the existence of absolute truth, maintain that opposite propositions are equally true, if believed with

equal sincerity, and thus virtually deny the being of God, in whom, (if there be a God,) there must be essential and immutable truth.

Such is the view which presents itself at first sight. Thus are the sons of God in various departments of the church veiled from each other's knowledge. But yet there is a strong family likeness among them, diverse as they are from one another in garb and mien. *Christian union* is my present subject,—that union, in which the true sons of God may recognize each other as of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and by which they may be made manifest to the world, not as scattered and disjoined, but as one body in Christ. Wherein are the sons of God virtually united? What keeps them apart? How may they be made one? What beneficent results, as regards the church and the world, would flow from a closer union among Christians? These are the questions, which I shall now endeavor to answer.

Wherein are the sons of God virtually united? While Christians are hurling anathemas at one another, and, through the mist of bigotry and exclusiveness, only here and there one can trace a brother's countenance in any sect but his own, what is the true picture, that would present itself, as we passed from sect to sect, and from zone to zone? We should see the church universal "walking by the same rule, minding the same thing." The song of praise, the prayer of faith goes up from every altar to the same Lord God Almighty. They all have learned to look to the Ruler of the universe as a Father, and to bring a contrite and grateful heart as the accepted sacrifice. And there is another name, which they all blend with the Father's in their worship. From every christian temple and heart rise hosannas to the Lamb that was slain, and all unite in celebrating him as the spotless image of God, as the unfailing guide and Saviour of man, as the conqueror of sin and death. Follow believers of every sect to their homes, through the week, to their posts of business, to their scenes of trial. So far as they profess to be under the guidance of their faith, you see them every where a pecu-

liar people, and the same people. What is the character, which all are striving to form? It is that of love to God, inward purity, diffusive charity, contentment, and resignation. They all admit, without a dissenting voice, the same catalogue of cardinal christian graces; and they all look to the same revered image of God in Jesus as their pattern. Mark them, as they bow under the burden of conscious infirmity and guilt. It is on the same cross that every eye is fixed,—it is on that same suffering incarnation of God's love, that every heart casts itself for pardon. Mark them, as the changes of life and the waves of tribulation sweep over them. They all look to the same Captain of their salvation made perfect through suffering, and hear from his throne above the same inspiring words, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And when earth shuts in upon their view, and the closing hour draws near, every eye rests upon the same deserted shroud and forsaken tomb,—every dying Christian of every name goes with Peter and Mary to the sepulchre, beholds the vision of angels, and sees the risen Lord step forth new born from the dead; and then all cast their eyes forward to the same undecaying paradise of God, into which Jesus will welcome them, to scenes of endless duty and joy, in which he will be, as he was on earth, their Guide and Forerunner. Thus far are all, who bear the name of Christ, agreed. Thus far is the communion of the sons of God entire, the bond of their peace unbroken.

But from this broad common ground, the sectarian hurries us back to points of difference, and those on subjects of prime importance, such as the nature of God and Christ, the atonement through Christ, the agency by which man is regenerated, and the like. We are told that these are essential matters, most vitally affecting christian practice,—that, if one view with regard to them be right, the opposite must be fundamentally wrong. We are also told that God has promised to guide into all truth those, who sincerely love and obey him,—to teach his doctrine to those, who keep his commandments, so that, on these prime points of controversy, there can of necessity be but

one belief among genuine Christians. Consequently, all who depart from the one true doctrine on these subjects, must be false disciples, either hypocrites or self-deceived. We point in reply to the Catholics Fenelon and Cheverus, men full of a heavenly spirit, yet belonging to a church which it has been too fashionable to term "the mother of abominations,"—to the Calvinistic apostle Oberlin, than whom a more Christlike follower of the Lamb has never broken the word of life to hungry souls,—to the meek and philanthropic Quaker Penn,—to the pure, gentle, forgiving, prayerful spirit of Priestley, who yet united in his creed the forbidding epithets of Humanitarian and Materialist. We ask if, of such a cluster of seemingly holy men, all but one are sons of perdition. We are still referred to the promise, that they, who truly do their Father's will, shall best know of his doctrine, and are told that, if these wide diversities of creed are consistent with holiness of heart, the promise of God has become of none effect.

We also adhere to the word of promise; but maintain that it is kept to all good men of every sect. Widely apart as they seem to be, they all know of the doctrine, and perhaps one no better than another. For what is true religious knowledge? It is heart-knowledge, not head-knowledge,—it is consciousness and experience, not names and formularies. Who truly knows God? Not he, who can number up his attributes with school-boy precision; but he, to whom the arm of the Lord has been revealed, who has drawn near to him in prayer, and felt the grace of God shed abroad in his heart. Who best knows Christ? Not he, who can fix the most confidently his rank in the universe; but he, who can look into his own soul, and see a Christ formed within,—even that meekness and gentleness, that love and submission, that purity and piety, which dwelt in the Saviour. Nay, who best knows the rank of the Son,—the place which he occupies in the spiritual universe? Not he, who can trace the mystery of his birth from the bosom of the Father; but he, who has prayed with him on the mountain, watched with him in the garden, caught the breathings of

his unquenchable love on Calvary, stooped to look into the place where the Lord lay, and had his risen Redeemer made known to him in the breaking of bread. Who best knows what regeneration is? Not he, who can talk of times and seasons, and tell whence the spirit cometh, and whither it goeth; but he, whose heart has become the temple of indwelling and inworking Deity, even though all that he can say of it be, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Who knows the most of heaven? Not he, who can say with assurance how the dead are raised, and in what bodies they come; but he, whose conversation is in heaven, whose daily walk is with God and Jesus. Of two men, one of them selfish and worldly, the slave of appetite or passion, yet professing a creed philosophically accurate,—the other a holy, Christlike man, yet professing a creed grossly inaccurate in its terms and definitions,—I maintain that the latter knows infinitely more of Christianity than the former. The doctrines, which divide the christian world, are for the most part either modes of philosophy, or forms of classification,—the mere heraldry of religion. And we might compare the selfish and worldly man with an accurate creed to the professor of heraldry, who knows the rank and pedigree of every monarch and noble in Europe, but whose life is all plebeian and obscure, his whole intercourse with the meanly born and bred,—while the good man with a wrong creed is like the intimate companion of kings and nobles, who enjoys their daily converse, but forgets their name and ancestry.

Thus is God's promise fulfilled to disciples of every name; and we are now prepared, I trust, to admit, not only that the sons of God have a broad, common, uncontroverted ground, but also that *they agree on the very points, on which they seem to disagree, that is, so far as their religious apprehension of these points is concerned.* The differences are philosophical,—not religious. An eminent Trinitarian professor recently stated in a public discourse, that the doctrine of the *Trinity* is no part of the christian *religion*, but only the *philosophical* mode, in which the Scriptures represent the divine nature. A like re-

mark would apply in general to disputed dogmas on all sides. They are not such, as can be embodied in the character,—worked into the fabric of the spiritual temple. If you could come at the minds of devout Trinitarians and Unitarians, you would find that their impressions of the divine character were the same, and that they looked with the same sentiments to Jesus as the image of God and the exemplar of man. If you could see the thoughts of those, who believe, and those, who deny the vicarious character of our Saviour's sufferings, you would find that they agreed in their estimate of human ill-desert, and of the free and infinite mercy of our heavenly Father, and that they equally looked to Jesus, as to God made manifest in the flesh for man's redemption. If you could reach the ideas of good men, who profess unlike views on the subject of regeneration, you would find them agreed as to the necessity, evidences and fruits of true repentance, and also with regard to man's moral dependence and accountableness. The points in dispute have nothing to do with religion properly so called, that is, with the principles and affections, with duty and devotion.

Thus are the sons of God virtually one. And, in the various divisions of the Christian Church, there are many, who, though the members of exclusive sects, are under bondage not willingly, but are yearning for a more comprehensive union and a broader charity. Many are the hands half stretched in brotherly fellowship,—many are the hearts, longing to break forth from the slavery of creeds and parties into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The earnest expectation already waiteth.

But *what keeps Christians apart?* I reply, *Sectarian organizations*, which are unnatural, irrational, unchristian. Were there room under the gospel system for *religious* sects, there would be great propriety in organizing them, and sectarian exclusiveness might in some case become a solemn duty. Were there some who denied, and others who affirmed the omnipresence or the love of God, were there a diversity of opinion as to the purity of our Saviour's character, were there those, who took

from, or added to the divine features of his spirit, were there any question as to the duty of repentance and a holy life, here would be fair ground for the institution of sects, and a call on all friends of the truth to rally around some sectarian standard. But you are well aware, that there are no divisions of this kind. There are indeed in the christian church, the irreverent, the selfish, and the worldly, slanderers and tale-bearers; but they have never formed themselves into sects, and advocated their darling sins on gospel grounds,—when they do, it will be time for us to form ourselves into counter sects to oppose and rebuke them.

The sects now existing are sects of philosophy, not of religion. And in this consists the folly and wickedness of sectarianism. It is the exalting of the human above the divine,—the laying of greater stress on the speculations of men than on the commandments of God. Philosophy is placed before religion,—the faith of the head before that of the heart. This indeed is the *heresy* spoken of and denounced in unmeasured terms in the New Testament,—not honest difference of opinion, but the making of divisions without essential difference,—the marring of the unity of the spirit by strife about words. This heresy cannot but cleave to every organized sect. Men will never regard as secondary the ground, on which their organizations, and their distinctive names are based. If men habitually called themselves Christians, and only Christians, a spiritual kindred to Christ would be constantly present to their minds as the one thing needful. But now that men call themselves Trinitarians, and Unitarians, they think of the question of the Trinity or the undivided unity of God as of more consequence, than any question of christian practice.

Moreover, while sectarian organizations are thus unfavorable to vital piety, they cannot exist without keeping alive the spirit of clanship, and exclusiveness. They yoke together men of unlike principles,—they separate those, whom God hath joined. They dismember Christ's true body, and set up in its stead an image composed of as heterogeneous materials, as that which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. Those of every party clasp

in fellowship the cold and selfish of their own name, and repel from their sympathy the pure and devout of the opposite camp. And yet, when, by some rare chance, good people, who have been kept apart by a party shibboleth, come together, they discover and own that it was a mere name that kept them apart, while in every article of heart-faith there had always been a close coincidence. But these recognitions across sectarian lines are the exception, not the rule. So long as sects remain, the great essentials of religion will stay in the back-ground, and men will quarrel about names and shadows.

It is, therefore, not with gloomy forebodings, but with high hopes, that I see the great sects of Christendom all rotten at heart, and with a worm at the core. In our own country, this is pre-eminently the case. There is not one of our great religious parties, that embodies not within itself elements of disunion and dismemberment. Among the Presbyterians, there is the New School and the Old School,—the Episcopalians have their High Church and their Low Church,—the Baptists are fast breaking themselves into smaller companies,—while the foreign leaven of miscalled Transcendentalism is working in the bosom of the Unitarian community. What less can be portended by these things, than the speedy breaking up of our established sects, and the re-organizing of the christian world, as we trust, on Christ as the chief corner-stone? To some minds, the present seems dark and full of evil omens. But the church cannot fail, or the gospel die. Old ecclesiastical foundations are indeed crumbling; antiquated opinions are set aside; religious institutions, which have served *Bastiles* as for free spirits, are vanishing into thin air. But old things are passing away, only to prepare for the descent of the “new Jerusalem from God out of heaven.” The thrones are cast down; but it is only that “the Ancient of days may sit, and the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom be given into his hands.” Then shall there be “one fold, and one shepherd.” Men will no longer speak of this church and that church; but of one universal church of Christ, of which, every independent body of believers, walking

by the light which God hath given them, and worshipping him as conscience dictates, shall constitute a branch, recognized by all, judged by none. The disciple of Jesus, wherever he goes, will be welcomed in his Master's name, will sit down with his brethren at their solemn feasts; and "there shall be none to molest or to make afraid in all God's holy mountain."

The question now presents itself, *how are we to promote this so desirable end of Christian union?* I answer, in the first place, not by erecting sects in order to pull down sects, not even though we take *union* and *liberty* for our watch-word and banner. A sect is in its very essence exclusive. Seizing upon some one distinctive point, and bringing that out in undue relative prominence, it compels its adherents to look with disfavor and distrust upon those, who differ from them in that one point, however nearly they may agree with them in every thing else. A sect, which took *union* for its watch-word, would soon become bigoted against all, who would not fall in with its own plan of union, would wax censorious against the censorious, would hurl anathemas at the exclusive, and grow full of all uncharitableness in the cause of charity.

Nor yet are we to seek to advance the cause of christian union by a forced agreement in matters of speculation. Our minds are not constituted, or educated alike. Our theories will and must vary, and it is well that they should. Dead uniformity would not be an union worth having. It is by unity in difference, by harmony amidst conflicting theories, by fellowship of the heart, while the individuality of mind remains unbroken, that God is most truly glorified. The harmony, which he would see in his church, is like that, which flows from yonder organ, in which every pipe has its separate note, and they might all be taken asunder, and be made to bray harsh and repulsive discord; but now, brought together by one controlling will, and the keys struck with one design, these various notes blend in perfect concord to the praise of the Almighty.

Nor yet are we to seek to bring ourselves into union with

our christian brethren by feint or by fawning. It will do no good, it will only mar our characters in point of sincerity and uprightness, for us to pursue a trimming, vacillating course, to cloak our own convictions, to express assent where we do not cordially feel it, to coax into our service the hacknied phrases or the party measures of those who differ from us, to lie constantly in wait for their expressions of courtesy, or to obtrude ours, where we have reason to believe that they will be unwelcome. An union brought about at the expense of integrity, by evasion, by concealment, is an union out of Christ,—an union, which crucifies him afresh, and tramples on his bleeding body.

The great highway of christian holiness is the true way of union. In this we have not a mere union of head or hand; but of heart. For the same chords vibrate, the same handwriting of God beams forth in every soul. The same great departments of duty lie before us all. In the way of love and of gospel obedience, we may all walk together in entire oneness of counsel and of spirit. Let us seek first of all the culture of the heart and life, let us make growth in piety our chief aim; and then we shall be united fully and cordially with all, who have the same great end in view. Unite yourselves, my friends, with Christ. Bring yourselves into harmony with him. Go not over on this hand or on that, to take your key-note from these or those of your fellow-disciples. But draw near to Jesus, and attune your hearts by the breathings of his spirit. Thus become yourselves strings in the harp of God. Let no notes vibrate from your souls, but those of a Christlike love to God and man. In this way you place yourselves in the true centre of union; and, as fast as men grow in their Master's spirit they will grow into union with you.

There are those from every portion of the christian church, who are thus coming, and taking their places, as brethren, at the feet of Jesus, making it manifest that they are the sons of God. Christians, I am persuaded, are moving together,—drawing nearer to each other. The bitterness of controversy is softened. The voice of harsh denunciation, when it comes,

comes not now as the shout of multitudes, but as "the voice of one crying in the desert." The philanthropic movement, which has infused new life into the church, by likening its members more and more to the great Head of the church, has linked them more closely together. Men cannot labor or pray in concert for the purging away of guilt and misery, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, and then go their ways to their own separate conventicles to denounce and abuse each other. But as Christians meet, from various departments of the church, for the diffusion of the Bible, for the promotion of temperance and peace, in the cause of the prisoner and the slave, each learns to trace the outlines of his Master's spirit in his brother of a different creed,—they perceive in each other the tokens of discipleship, the seal of adoption, and grow impatient of the party trammels, which still restrict their free and cordial fellowship. Philanthropy is fast melting off the shackles of bigotry, and ushering in the manifestation of the sons of God.

But it is time for us to hasten to our closing inquiry : *What beneficent effects would flow from such an union among Christians, as would manifest the true children of God to be indeed one family ?*

Sectarian divisions do more than all things else to retard the progress of our religion. They arrest the anxious and inquiring at the very threshold of the church ; and convert the earnest cry, "What shall I do to be saved," into vain and unprofitable questionings about the mere drapery of religion. They discourage the timid and humble seeker after truth, by showing him no communion, where he can be sheltered from the harsh judgments and the anathemas of those of other creeds. They embolden infidels to attack the citadel of our faith, while its rightful defenders are fighting with each other among the outworks. They prevent the diffusion of the gospel in heathen lands. A Turk at Jerusalem once said to a christian missionary, "Why do you come to us?" "To bring peace," was the reply. "Peace?" answered the Turk, leading him to a window, and pointing to Mount Calvary. "There, on the very

spot where your Lord poured out his blood, the Mohammedan is obliged constantly to interfere, to prevent Christians of rival sects from shedding each other's blood."

The progress of the gospel has indeed been slow. Almost two thousand years have elapsed, since the command went forth, "Go ye out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and yet nearly three-fourths of the human race are still destitute of the light of life. But when we consider at what a disadvantage the gospel has always wrought, on account of the distracted state of the church, the slow rate, at which it has been propagated, is so far from being a matter for surprise, that it seems a miracle that it should have made any progress at all, nay, should have even survived to the present time. Had it been the counsel or work of man, as a house divided against itself, it must long ere this have come to nought. Consider, that the champions of irreligion and sin have understood the efficacy of combined effort,—have taken counsel together against the Lord and against his Christ. But the servants of God have gone to their work alone. Single philanthropists have stepped into entirely new departments of effort, without so much as a helping hand or a godspeed. Solitary missionaries have borne the banner of the cross into the heart of Paganism, and, like the dying Sampson, single-handed, have seized the pillars of the enemy's house only to perish beneath its ruins. And when the servants of God have joined society, it has been too often a Paul and a Barnabas, with the whole weight of a noble enterprise resting upon them, yet unequally yoked, and mutual hindrances rather than helps. Still, under all these disadvantages, the servants of God have effected the most. The kingdom of light has been extending itself,—has been daily making new encroachments on the dominion of darkness. The world has been constantly growing better; and often have a few single-handed followers of Christ done vastly more for their Master, in a given age or community, than thousands of his professed opponents have effected against him.

But if, while the church has been under the deep cloud of bigotry and disunion, this sure progress has been made, what

may we not anticipate, when the cloud shall pass away, when the sons of God shall become fully manifest, and it shall be said of those of every name and creed, "See how these Christians love one another!" This is the spectacle which is to draw all men unto Jesus. This proof of his divinity has God reserved for these latter days. On this does Jesus himself rest for the regeneration of our race. "Neither pray I for these alone," says he, "but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word, *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*" May God roll on this union of all in Jesus. Then shall nations be born in a day. Then shall the angel of the covenant hasten with the everlasting gospel to every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue.

Brethren of this Christian Church and Society, I trust that the discussion, in which I have led you, has not been inappropriate to the glad solemnities and high hopes of the present occasion. The union, of which I have spoken, is one, of which you cannot but feel the desirableness, and which it lies in your power essentially to promote. In re-establishing the ministry of the word, remember that your pastor can do you good, only so far as you and he are united together, with and in Christ Jesus. No mere external growth or peace can make a religious society truly prosperous. You prosper only, in proportion to your growth in your Master's spirit. Your only life is as a branch of the true vine.

I rejoice with you, my friends, in the rich promise of this day. It is with the warmest gratitude, that I meet under so happy circumstances a flock, to whom, in the earliest days of my ministry, my affections were so strongly drawn by repeated expressions of kindness and confidence, and to whom I still feel an attachment second only to that, which binds me to the people of my own immediate charge. It is my earnest prayer, that the great Head of the church may richly bless pastor and people. Long may you rejoice in his light. May the witness of his ministry be in heaven; its record on high.

C H A R G E,

BY REV. BAILEY LORING, ANDOVER.

MY BROTHER, you are not now, for the first time, assuming the responsibility of the pastoral office. This you have already borne in another part of God's vineyard. You have learned from experience its duties and trusts, its sorrows and joys. I shall not be expected, therefore, to place before you, on this occasion, anything new, but merely to stir up your mind, by way of remembrance of those things, you have already received. Think not that I stand here to lord it over you, either in my own name, or in the name of any ecclesiastical body. The power to do so, has never been delegated by the great Head of the church. One is your master, said Christ to his first disciples, and all ye are brethren. As a brother, then, and as the organ of brethren assembled to solemnize the connection you have formed with this church and society, I offer you a word in reference to your sacred trust. You have accepted the offer of this favored spot, for your future home. This vineyard of the Lord, hitherto cultivated by venerable and skilful hands, is the object of your special charge. You have pledged yourself to labor for this people in the Lord. There is a meaning in this pledge you have given. The time has been in New England, when as a bond of union, it stood second to none. But times are changed. We live in a restless age. The elements of society are in constant agitation. This fearful conflict has reached the institutions of religion. The pastoral office is shorn of its once venerated locks; and its baldness is an object for the finger of scorn. Hence, now, to assume the clerical office has become quite a trifling affair; and the ties that bind a minister to his people, are severed with as little ceremony as you separate the flaxen cord. How fatal to a successful ministry,—how ruinous to the best interests of the church! Lend not the aid of your example to such a system of ecclesiastical misrule. Rebuke the first risings of a restless spirit in your own soul. Sacrifice not the honor, nor the interests of the pastoral office, to the calls of indolence, ambition, or pecuniary speculation. Begin your ministry in this place, and lay your plans of usefulness, with reference to its permanency.

Your first object with your people will be to preach the word.

Bring your whole soul to this object. Preach the truth in love—in love to God—in love to Christ—in love to your flock. Let your topics, for public instruction, be chosen with reference to the wants of your people. They will meet you here as moral, accountable, immortal beings,—as sinners seeking the way of salvation, stricken with the trials of an earthly pilgrimage, and expectant of a future and never-ending rest. Make your public appeals to their nature, their experience, hopes, fears, sorrows, consolations. You must enlighten the understanding in the great truths of religion ; but beware of all speculations, that serve but a momentary pleasure, or the gratifications of an unprofitable curiosity. Let your addresses from the pulpit be plain, direct, pungent. Take for your example the great Master-preacher, both in matter and manner. Preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. And ever measure your complacency with your services, not by the sum of personal applause they bring you, but by the amount of humility, contrition, and holy purposes they awaken in your hearers. When you so preach as to send your audience home, dissatisfied with themselves, and thinking but little of you,—you then preach to the purpose. Your words are with power.

Let it be a leading object with you, to secure the confidence of your flock. Without this, you will labor in your public services in vain. The efficiency of your ministry will depend, in a good degree, on the hold you secure upon those you serve. You must produce the conviction, that you are something more to them, than a public teacher. You must make them feel, that they have in you a fast friend, at all times, and in all respects ;—that all their substantial interests are identified with yours ; and that your highest pleasure is, in your best services for them. The foundation of this confidence must be laid in your private intercourse with your flock. You must meet them at the fireside and home—in the house and by the way ; not with the formalities of a stranger, but with the freedom of a bosom friend. Show them, in a proper way, that you are not indifferent to their temporal welfare, that you rejoice with them in all their worldly prosperity. Be ever with them in their sickness, and trouble. Wait not the summons of a messenger to the bed of the sick and dying, and to the house of mourning. Let your ready sympathy, and your prompt action anticipate an expression of their wants. In your social intercourse with your people,

never lose sight of the Pastor. Bear in mind your immense responsibility. Let the parent—the child—the brother—the friend—the companion, you assume among them, be hallowed by a religious influence. Make every such occasion tributary to the ultimate object of your ministry. By your whole demeanor make it manifest, that you seek them, not theirs.

As a pledge of Peter's love to his Master, he was repeatedly directed to feed his lambs. My brother, forget not the children and youth of your charge. They are the hope of the Church and the State. By kind and unwavering attention, entwine yourself around their confidence and affection. Secure an influence over them, that will give you access to their minds and hearts. Whenever, and wherever you meet and mingle, by a kind word, and an affectionate manner, fail not to give the impression, that you have an interest in them;—that they are objects of your solicitude and love. Encouraging their religious culture in the sanctuary of their home,—training them up in the bosom of the Sabbath School, lay deep and broad their foundation for piety and usefulness.

Providence has cast your lot in the midst of conflicting opinions. You will often come under the inspection of those, whose faith differs from your own. Treat them with tenderness and candor. Remember they hold, in common with yourself, the right of private judgment. Condemn no man for his honest dissent from what you consider religious truth. Under whatever name the image of Christ may appear, embrace it in the arms of christian love. Be gentle unto all men,—in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves. And be always ready to give an answer to every man, that asketh a reason for the hope that is in you. In fine, my brother, take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it. Be faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive a crown of life.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY REV. HENRY A. MILES, OF LOWELL.

You have now been set apart, my brother, by prayer to Almighty God, and by the apostolic charge, to the work of the ministry in this place. The pastors and messengers of the churches, here assem-

bled, feel that they have yet one more duty to discharge to you, and that is, to give you the symbol of their sincere affection, and the pledge of their Christian Fellowship. It is in their name, then, and by their appointment, that I offer to you this Right Hand. To you I need not explain the meaning of this act. The hand of Fellowship you have received before. You yourself have given it. And when you call to mind the joy, and the fervent prayer, with which, in times past, you have welcomed a brother beloved, as a laborer into the vineyard of our Lord, you will not doubt, I am sure, that to *us* this is more than a mere form, that our heart goes with our hand, that we mean something when we promise to you our sympathy, counsel, and aid, and assure you of our prayers for your prosperity and peace. My brother, if there be any relation known among men in which sincere love should be felt, it is in the relation we now bear to you, and you to us, as ministering brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if there be one spot on the face of the earth where it is proper to declare and pledge our love, it is here where we first meet you at that altar of God, which you are set apart to serve. That love, my brother, be ours. We pledge it to you,—you pledge it to us. May we be faithful to each other's souls—and may He who has the issues of all things in his hands, bless the transactions of this hour to your good, and to the good of many hearts. May He give you health and strength for your labors; enable you to fulfil your course with joy, and the ministry you have now received of the Lord; and grant you finally many souls as your crowns of rejoicing.

My brother, we have known you, and you have known us, but for a little while. A year ago, who could have foreseen such a meeting with you as this? We have heard of your inquiries after truth, of the spirit of meekness and affection with which you made known what had been revealed to your mind, and of the trials of your feelings which you have met—the sacrifice of former intimacies, the breaking up of all your settled plans of life, and the seeking of new friendships among those who were utter strangers to you. But, my brother, you will not think of the trial that has tried you “as though a strange thing happened unto you.” I have no doubt that I speak within the bounds of truth when I say, that more than one half of all the ministering brethren in our connection, of your years, have, at one period or another of their lives, passed through the same change in their religious opinions which you have recently met. If

I may be allowed to speak for myself, I may say, that I can well understand what some of your trials have been. At the feet of pious parents was I brought up, who, as a part of my religious education, carefully instructed me in the catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. I can well remember how I felt when I found what I had thought was the solid ground, trembling and giving way beneath my feet; when the doctrines, which I had believed were of God, and indispensable to our salvation, appeared merely as the inventions and traditions of men. My astonishment, my anxiety of mind, my fearful forebodings that all that was stable and sacred was crumbling around me, I shall never forget. But my recompense has been in the clearer, more reasonable, and more hopeful light which beams from the faith which I believe to be "according to the simplicity that is in Christ." And there are times when I feel a thankfulness to God for the change through which my mind passed, which I can find no words to express. I would not have alluded to what is so personal to myself, did I not feel sure, my brother, of the sympathy at least of your heart.

We rejoice, then, in the light which we believe was given to you. We rejoice above all that you were faithful to it, that you did not stifle your honest doubts, as if they were wicked things, that you went on inquiring, and, in spite of those fears and trials which we have reason to apprehend often silence many, that you were determined to have your own faith, to yourself, before God. We will not doubt that your reward will be with those who obey God and not man.

Coming, then, my brother, to enter upon a new sphere of action and inquiry, to enjoy new means of observation and study, and to form new associations and intimacies in the new brotherhood into which you are now introduced, you will prize, I know, the rare opportunity of judging what is most useful and true. We welcome you as a new inquirer after the two great ends so many are praying for—higher views of spiritual truth, and a more efficient application of them to the consciences and hearts of men. May it be your privilege and blessing to aid us; and having occupied different points of view, and been taught in different schools of observation and experience, may you be enabled to see the good work of the Lord here signally prospering in your hands.

We rejoice that the independence of mind, of which you have given proof, is an assurance that you will not follow us in anything

which does not seem to you to be useful and true. You who have showed the spirit, have not forgotten the words of the memorable John Robinson, the first pastor to the first church of the Pilgrim Fathers, as the little band left Leyden; "We charge you to follow us no farther than to you it seems that we follow Christ." Go on then, my brother, observing and inquiring. Continue to have for your motto no sentiment that makes advancement in light and knowledge a sin, but that other sentiment of the Polish brethren, "We are not ashamed to improve." This Right Hand of our Fellowship is no league to tie you down to any forms. It shall be given to you, go where you will, if so be the spirit of truth be your guide. Not among us shall you find honest differences of opinion treated as a crime, deserving excommunication. We hold that to be unworthy of the land of the Pilgrim Fathers, and of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

Finally, my brother, will you receive this right hand again? Take it now as "of private interpretation." I am glad that the pleasant intercourse which we enjoyed in a distant place, may here be, from time to time, renewed. And as you are now my neighbor as well as fellow-laborer, may we give proof how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in love; and by our fidelity, by our prayers and counsels for each other, may the beauty of the Lord be upon us, and the work of our hands may he establish.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE,

BY REV. NATHANIEL GAGE.

Christian Brethren and Friends; in briefly addressing you upon this interesting occasion, I shall not urge upon you the duty of providing for the comfortable support of your pastor; for my own experience assures me, that you will not be wanting in such duty.

I shall not dwell upon your obligations to meet your minister, in the house of God, upon the Sabbath, to listen, candidly, to his instructions; for I call to mind, with pleasure, the exemplary manner in which you have been accustomed, during my ministry, to resort to the sanctuary for the purposes of instruction and devotion, and I trust that to this duty you will also be faithful.

Nor shall I attempt to impress upon your minds your duty to treat your minister with respect and affection; to be indulgent to his failings; to put the best construction upon whatever, in his teachings or conduct, may not accord, precisely, with your own impressions of what is right and proper; for the unvaried kindness and forbearance, which I have experienced from you, convince me, that it will be your study and endeavor to promote his happiness.

The institutions and ordinances of the gospel are means for the promotion of ends. Your minister will labor for such ends, and has a right to your zealous coöperation. He comes to you, as I believe, with a heart glowing with christian love, and chastened by the spirit of christian holiness, and he will study to promote such love and holiness amongst you. Such is the great end toward which the efforts of both minister and people should be directed. Let the spirit of our Master breathe its chastening power through the soul; let christian love warm the heart; let the claims of practical holiness be uniformly respected, and society would enjoy a foretaste of the bliss of heaven, notwithstanding the difficulties of seeing eye to eye. But in the undue importance attached to speculative differences, what a humiliating spectacle do christian communities present! "The ear is pained, the soul is sick" with the din of unhallowed strife; and the Spirit of God—like the dove sent forth from the ark—finding no place of rest, returns to its native skies. Christians, instead of breathing their Master's spirit, and opening their souls to the light of truth and the warmth of holy love, are often taught to hug their prejudices and their miserable party feelings, with a tenacity fatal to the life of God in the soul—to the practical fruits of the gospel. I would advise you to encourage your minister in the pursuit of truth; still never at the expense of godliness, of christian deeds, ever prompted by the true spirit of Christ, and without which, whatever may be the pretensions of a christian community, they afford a more fitting likeness of hell, than heaven.

Among the important subjects to which your pastor will direct your attention, is the duty of devoting yourselves, without reservation or delay, to piety and holy obedience. It is vain to think of serving God acceptably, unless religion be entertained in the heart, from which—as in the circulation of the blood in the animal body—pure vital influences may pervade the entire spiritual man. To lead a merely reputable life from worldly motives, is neither consistent

with the real demands of the gospel, nor the security of our virtue and salvation. The path of the christian pilgrim through the world, cannot be steadily illumined by any torch not kindled from the Sun of Righteousness. The foes to be met, are too numerous and powerful to be resisted, in any other armor than that of the living God. The prize to be secured, is too spiritual to be distinctly seen, otherwise than by the eye of faith, uniformly directed toward heaven. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"—this should be the language of all; language giving but a true expression to the lofty purposes and pure breathings of souls, that have been born of God and baptized in the waters of life. It matters not so much what we may say, speculatively, as to our moral condition, before the soul and life have been consecrated to God and duty, as it does that such consecration be sincerely made. This is the essential point. This dedication of himself to God in Christ—by whatever name, in technical theology, it may be called—it is in each man's power to make. And among those who have not made it, none are so pure as not to need it; none so wholly evil as to be unable to make it; and none will be consistently, permanently religious, until they have made it, in the measure demanded by their actual condition and the spirit of the gospel. Upon this great object, the efforts of the people no less than of the preacher should directly bear. It can do little good to give expositions of truth and duty, unaccompanied by an effort by those who hear, as well as by those who preach the word, to prepare the heart for their favorable reception and obedience. The seed may be scattered, with a lavish hand, upon a soil overrun with weeds, which the plough has not fitted for its reception; but hopes of a harvest from seed thus sown, will be disappointed. Let every one breathe the fervent prayer, and make all suitable exertions, that he may become a faithful disciple of Christ; and let your own zealous coöperation ever go with the efforts of your pastor, who will labor to produce a result so devoutly to be wished.

He will urge upon you the duty of frequent and fervent prayer. I would not advocate an ostentatious piety. I doubt not such piety may, and sometimes does, afford too great a similitude to an angel radiant with seeming glory, but concealing, beneath such outward guise, the spiritual deformities of Satan. A merely ostentatious piety, that feeds on the applause of men, and draws not its nourishment, mainly, from that living bread, which came down from hea-

ven, must, in the nature of things, ensure the soul's damnation. "The hypocrite's hope shall perish." But the fear lest our piety may degenerate into ostentation, should not deter us from cultivating and breathing the spirit of true, manly, heart-felt devotion. While God looks with displeasure upon the prayer of the self-righteous Pharisee, He nevertheless insists that the humble confession and petition—in the spirit of the devout Publican—be not withheld. Brethren, is there prayer enough amongst us? The power of gravitation is not more necessary to keep the earth in its due relation to the sun—so important to its reception of light and heat—than is the spirit and habit of prayer to keep the soul in proper harmony with the Father of our spirits. Is it too much to say, that every one should be so familiar with the holy exercise, that, should occasion require, he could lead, with propriety, the devotions of a religious assembly?

Do we make use enough of the social principle of our nature, in enkindling and imparting a devotional spirit? That mode of dispensing religious truth, and stamping holy impressions upon the heart, which would mainly exclude the operation of such a principle, is, I am persuaded, as unsound in philosophy, as it is contrary to the genius of Christianity. Should your minister—as I hope he will—pursue a course amongst you, fitted to appeal to this principle, in the promotion of religion, I trust you will encourage and sustain him in it.

Time will not permit me to dwell upon other topics appropriate to such an occasion. Wherever the portion which remains to me of life, may be spent, I shall ever recur, with grateful emotions, to the intercourse which I have enjoyed with you. And in behalf of your minister, I cannot ask from you more uniform kindness and regard, than it was my lot to enjoy, in the six years of harmony and friendship, which I spent amongst you. May Heaven's richest blessings crown the relation into which you have now entered, with a new pastor. May you derive abundant instruction and profit from his ministrations; and in the great day of account, may you, a faithful pastor and a holy people, clad in robes of the redeemed, with crowns of righteousness on your heads, meet joyfully in heaven, to partake of the inheritance of the just made perfect.

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